



## Executive Director's Report January 2012

### Council Operations

**Council Members:** Heidi Haas was recognized as an *Exceptional Alaskan* by Governor Sean Parnell for establishing the Autism Society of Alaska and coordinating autism awareness walks; these awards recognize Alaskans from across the state who show the greatness of Alaskan and Alaskans. Milton "Smitty" Cheemuk was re-elected Mayor of St. Michael.

**Council Staff:** Patrick Reinhart received the national Earl Walden Award for Outstanding Achievement in Rural Advocacy for advancing rural independent living, not just in Alaska but nationally.

**Committees:** The Council standing committees executive, developmental disabilities, early intervention, education and legislative committees) meet monthly. The rural services committee meets bi-monthly and sub-committees of the autism ad hoc committee have been meeting over the past few months. Additional information is available upon request from Millie Ryan (executive committee), Teresa Holt or Carrie Predeger (developmental disabilities committee), Jennifer Jones (early intervention and education committees), Teresa Holt or Patrick Reinhart (legislative committee), Teresa Holt or Jennifer Jones (rural services committee) and Millie Ryan or Teresa Holt (autism ad hoc committee). The Council also formed a Medicaid Ad Hoc Committee, which held its first meeting at the end of November and will be meeting again in mid-January to examine ways in which Medicaid costs can be reduced. For more information, contact Carrie Predeger.

**Program Performance Report:** The Council's *Program Performance Report (PPR)* was submitted electronically to the federal Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) on December 30. A version for the public will be developed and disseminated soon. The Council also completed status reports on Council activities and projects funded by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. For more information, contact Teresa Holt

**Special Education Service Agency (SESA):** The full SESA board met December 9 to conduct ongoing board activities. For more information, contact Millie Ryan.

## **Research, Planning, Capacity Building and Systems Change**

**Alaska Works Initiative (AWI):** The Council is working with a variety of stakeholders to 1) transform Medicaid programs to emphasize employment and meet the needs of working Alaskans with disabilities; 2) ensure access to resources needed by Alaskans with disabilities to secure and maintain employment; and 3) collaborate with business and industry to assist youth and adults with disabilities to secure employment in Alaska's labor market. Although funding ended December 31, 2011, the Council secured a no-cost extension through December 31, 2012. For more information, contact Millie Ryan or Patrick Reinhart.

The Council also secured a supplemental grant award from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to address gaps in Alaska's employment infrastructure. These gaps include limited participation in its Medicaid Buy-in program and the lack of ongoing support services for individuals who need such support to secure and maintain their employment but who are not eligible for home and community-based waivers or supported employment services, or are on long waiting lists for waiver services. An initial planning meeting was held October 10. For more information, contact Millie Ryan.

**Note:** mentors are needed for ***Career Exploration Day***, which is scheduled for February 2, which is scheduled for February 2. For more information, contact Patrick Reinhart.

Major activities that occurred since the October Council meeting are outlined below.

**Alliance for Full Participation (AFP):** Several members of the AFP State Team attended the National AFP Summit in Washington, DC November 17-19 and refined the strategic plan to double the number of Alaskans with developmental disabilities who are working by 2015. Plan elements include mentor/peer-to-peer services, policy changes, policy-to-practice, business collaboration and transition to adult life.

**Business Outreach:** Patrick Reinhart continues a variety of activities to outreach to business and industry. He also participates in weekly Job X meetings.

**Microenterprise Program:** The Council receives funds from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to help Trust beneficiaries start their own businesses. There are three application periods per fiscal year, with the first period ending October 1; the application for funds is on the Council's website and extensive outreach was conducted to inform more people about the program. Seven loans were approved in late October. For more information, contact Patrick Reinhart.

**Peer Power:** Peer Power, the statewide self-advocacy organization, met in Fairbanks December 10. The 30+ participants discussed specific ways for working self-advocates with developmental disabilities help non-working adults and youth get and keep a job. Josie Boggs, the Council's Masters of Social Work

intern, will be assisting Peer Power members to implement their top priorities. For more information, contact Josie Boggs.

Project SEARCH: Project SEARCH provides internships in various hospital settings to students with developmental or severe physical disabilities in their last year of school. Project Search is a national model that has been replicated in over 30 states and internationally. Three programs are up and running this fall, including 8 students in Anchorage and 6 students each in Mat-Su and Fairbanks. In March, all three sites will be audited by the national Project SEARCH program, which requires local sites to use the Project Search model to fidelity, which the founders attribute to their national success. Planning is underway in Kenai for a fall start-up. The Council secured a Youth First grant for Project SEARCH from the Division of Business Partnerships. For more information, contact Patrick Reinhart.

State as a Model Employer: The State as a Model Employer survey went out to all State of Alaska employees on August 30, 2011 and closed on September 23. The Council received 4,547 responses (24.8% of all employees). To date, a preliminary analysis has been completed. The State as a Model Employer of People with Disabilities Workgroup will meet in mid-January to decide how the findings should be presented. For more information, contact Carrie Predeger.

**Disability Employment Initiative (DEI):** The Council is working with the Alaska Workforce Investment Board and the Employment Security Division to implement the DEI. The main goals of the grant are to 1) increase the number of adults with disabilities who use the 1-stop job centers by 20%; 2) increase the number of certified work incentives counselors and the number of customized employment and/or customized self-employment providers by 15%; and 3) increase the availability of local resources (e.g., asset building, accessible transportation) that help people with disabilities secure and maintain employment by 15%. Rich Sanders is serving on a national data collection committee to develop final data collection instruments that show clear outcomes of DEI activities. For further information, contact Rich Sanders.

Major activities that occurred since the October Council meeting are outlined below.

Accessibility: Physical accessibility reviews were completed at 16 job centers and changes were made to improve entrance accessibility (i.e., signage, ramps, parking areas). In addition, assistive technology reviews were conducted; upgrades and replacements will be completed by March 2012. All job center staff must demonstrate proficiency in using assistive technology with customers to achieve Disability Resource Coordinator proficiency.

Asset Building: Money Smart (online training) is now available to all job center customers. In addition, regular financial literacy classes are now available at 3 job centers with 2 beginning this quarter. Three Super Saturday events to provide info about Earned Income Tax Credits and free tax preparation will be held in conjunction with the American Association of Retired People. Over 40 tax

preparers across the state have received disability awareness training. The Muldoon Job Center is partnering with Cook Inlet Lending Center's Individual Development Account program, which includes financial literacy classes. Staff is partnering with the MatSu Homeless Coalition on free tax preparation and the "Homeless Connect" event scheduled for January 25. An Asset Building meeting is scheduled for Juneau January 23<sup>rd</sup> to start a Southeast Alaska Financial Partnership Network similar to the Anchorage Financial Partnership Network (i.e., United Way, Consumer Credit Counseling, Wells Fargo, AARP Tax Aides, Job Center).

Employment Network: The Juneau one-stop job center is now a Ticket-to-Work Employment Network (EN) and can serve ticket holders in southeast Alaska. An in-house staff person was identified to receive training to become a Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC) to ensure all individuals using the job centers as their EN have a work incentives plan completed. Weekly meetings have taken place between DVR, ESD, the Council and local service providers in Juneau to ensure a smooth and coordinated launching of the Juneau EN.

Ticket to Work: The Employment Security Division has one ½ time certified work incentives counselor on staff. The Juneau Employment Network is serving 5 individuals following Work Incentives Seminar Event (WISE) event in November. Fairbanks staff was trained in serving Ticket to Work customers and plans to open with WISE event in February; Mat Su and Anchorage will begin serving Ticket customers sometime in the summer. Staff is currently exploring ways to effectively serve Ticket holders remotely (away from main Employment Network locations). Several marketing activities are being used including ticket to work and public DEI websites; brochures and posters; in addition social security beneficiaries are being contacted directly and provided with a beneficiary CD.

Training: To date, 37 job center staff received Disability Resource Coordinator I training from Rich Sanders; of the 37, 8 were trained to be a Disability Resource Coordinator II. Self-paced webinar training with "hand-on" follow-up is being used. Training topics include Ticket to Work, Asset Building, Partnerships and Collaboration, Integrated Resource Teams, Accessibility in Job Centers, and Customized Employment.

**Alaska Safety Planning & Empowerment Network (ASPEN):** The Council's federal grant ended September 30. However, all partners (Alaska Network on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault, Alaska Native Justice Center and Center for Human Development) have committed to meeting regularly until Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority funds are available for replication July 1, 2012.

**Comprehensive Plan:** Council staff provided information on beneficiaries with developmental disabilities for the *Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Plan*.

**Stakeholder and Consumer Satisfaction Surveys:** The Stakeholder and Consumer Satisfaction Surveys were developed, disseminated, collected and analyzed for the FY11 PPR that was due December 31, 2011. Results will be

presented during the January Council meeting. For further information, contact Carrie Predeger.

### **Collaboration**

Council members and/or staff continue to coordinate and collaborate with a number of stakeholders, committees and groups, including but not limited to:

- Meeting with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Alaska Commission on Aging, the Alaska Mental Health Board, the Advisory Board on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse, the Alaska Brain Injury Network and the Suicide Prevention Council to reduce stigma and increase public awareness of the needs of Trust beneficiaries
- Working with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, beneficiary boards and other stakeholders to implement plans for five focus areas: 1) housing; 2) disability justice; 3) bring/keep the kids home; 4) Trust beneficiary initiatives; and 5) workforce development
- Working with the Alaska Mobility Coalition, the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, the Community Transportation Association of America, National Council on Independent Living, the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living and Project Action to increase the availability of accessible, coordinated community transportation statewide
- Participating on the monthly DD mini-grant proposal evaluation committee
- Participating on the data sub-committee and steering committee of the Comprehensive Plan for Trust Beneficiaries
- Serving on the steering committees for the Aging & Disability Resource Center and the Long-Term Supports and Services Plan
- Attending the Infant Learning Program Coordinators Conference
- Working with a variety of stakeholders to increase the availability of Positive Behavior Supports and Response to Instruction/Intervention statewide
- Participating in meetings of the Interdepartmental Early Childhood Coordinating Council
- Presenting to University of Alaska Southeast graduate students on the Council and its role as the Special Education Advisory Panel and the Interagency Coordinating Council on Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities
- Helping plan the Alaska State Special Education Conference
- Sponsoring and attending monthly meetings of the Alaska Infant Learning Providers Association
- Serving on the steering committee responsible for planning the implementation of the Complex Behaviors Hub in January 2012
- Participating in the final meeting of the steering committee for Alaska's Combating Autism grant
- Working with Online with Libraries (OWL) project and attending the Alaska Broadband Task Force with Senator Begich and Julius Genachowski, FCC Chairman to increase rural telecommunications access
- Working with the Deaf Education Board to address education concerns
- Attending monthly meetings of the Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities

- Participating in meeting with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services on the home and community-based waivers managed by Senior & Disabilities Services
- Presented on restraint and seclusion to the Alaska Association of School Boards
- Participating in a stakeholder meeting sponsored by the Department of Education & Early Development on disproportionality in special education
- Attending the Special Education Directors Conference
- Participating in a meeting with Senior & Disabilities Services on restraint and seclusion
- Helping plan the Midnight Sun Assistive Technology Conference
- Discussing special education on the *Kids These Days* radio show
- Participating in a variety of activities to improve early childhood social and emotional health, including the *TACSEI Pyramid Partnership*
- Participating in and helping staff the *FASD Partnership* meetings
- Participating in the Department of Education & Early Development's Graduation Working Group
- Participating in Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EDHI) advisory committee meetings
- Participating on the FY12 Deferred Maintenance and Accessibility Improvements Capital Grant Program Proposal Evaluation Committee
- Participating on the Alaska Commission on Aging State Plan Implementation Steering Committee
- Staffing the Health Promotion and Disability Ad Hoc Committee, which is Marcy Rein's Masters in Public Health project
- Participating on Stone Soup Group's Transition Advisory Board
- Participating on the AK CoP planning team to develop long term ways for students with cognitive disabilities to access the general curriculum
- Participating in emergency preparedness planning for people with disabilities
- Working with the Transportation Security Agency on ways to make the airport security screening process work better for people with disabilities
- Hosting the Association of Programs for Independent Living Conference in Anchorage, including introductions of legislators, delivering the opening keynote and participating on two panels

### **Advocacy**

- Testimony on adopting WorkKeys accommodations for students with severe cognitive disabilities and limited English proficiency was provided to the State Board of Education & Early Development
- Council members and staff met with Senator Begich's staff to discuss early intervention issues and opportunities for collaboration
- The Council provided a letter on restraint and seclusion in schools to Senator Harkin
- The Council is currently working on its response to draft home and community-based services regulations being proposed by the Department of Health & Social Services

- An analysis of the Governor's FY13 proposed budget was provided to Council staff, members and the Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities
- The Council sent out applications for travel stipends for Key Campaign and selected individuals to receive the stipends
- Council members and staff participated in the Whitehouse Roundtable on Transportation and Disability Issues during the annual transit conference
- A presentation on autism insurance coverage was made to the executive committee of the Alaska State Employees Association